AMUSEMENTS DURING HOLY WEEK

ARCHIE GUNN.

KOSTER AND BIAL'S
MATTHEWS AND BULGER
MERRI OSBORNE
IN
BURLESQUE

FRAU AGNES SORMA
AT
IRVING PLACE
THEATRE

GRAND OPERA HOUSE
"SOWING THE WIND"

WEBER AND FIELDS
MR AND MRS DREW

STAR
THE LIONS HEART

ACADEMY
"BRIAN BORU"

CASINO
THE WEDDING DAY

MURRAY HILL
"McCARTY'S MISHAPS"

AGNES SORMA IN "A DOLL'S HOUSE."

By Alan Dale

THERE are times when I almost feel inclined to wish that Eleonora Duse had stared away from America, and had never flaunted her school of original, perfect acting in our unprepared faces. One novelty invariably begets others. Start something new, and you'll be quite surprised to discover how many there are anxious to do the same thing—a trifle better, of course. Duse set the example, and every newcomer will be a Duse for years to come. We have had Germany and English artists. Last night Germany contributed her example. And now I breathlessly await a Chinese Duse, an Irish Duse, a colored Duse.

It was at the Irving Place Theatre that Agnes Sorma made her first appearance last night in the not-new play by Ibsen, known in our vernacular as "A Doll's House." And the German playhouse was in high feather, for the fame of Frau Sorma is a far-reaching affair, and there were men present who had seen her ten years ago, and did not hesitate to say that even then she was "great." The German actress, therefore, had nothing to fear from her atmosphere. It was warm, metaphorically and otherwise—especially otherwise—and what in print we call an "ovation" was given to the newcomer.

Agnes Sorma is said to have pleased Ibsen himself by her work as Nora, and as Ibsen must be about the only man on earth who could possibly find Nora either intelligible or probable, his praise has a decided value. Splendid actresses have tried to make a normal feminine creature of the hysterical heroine to whom even motherhood was of less consequence than her own egomania. Réjane played Nora at Albery's Theatre not so very long ago, and even the consummate artist could not reconcile us to the silly, tarantella-dancing creature who rushes away from hubby and children in order to vegetate in some secluded nook and educate herself.

The two German actresses did not appear to me to throw any new lights on this worthless subject. She is a good-looking woman of the style that we designate "pleasant." She has a "pleasant" face, and her features are agreeably mobile. She can at once move by her facial girls than she can by her dramatic art. Frau Sorma is slight, graceful and inconsequential—to look at. You see at once, however, that she is not quite ordinary, by her extreme ease, her perfect self-possession and a certain dominant manner that women learn how to wear, when they know that much is expected of them.

At the end of the first act of "A Doll's House" Frau Sorma had given a nice interpretation that was quite sufficient to keep the German audience in their seats until the end of the evening. It was an interpretation, however, that did not translate itself into other languages. You understand what I mean. If you happened to be fluently German this actress pleased you considerably. If you didn't—well, you felt that she did not comprehend the universal language. Great women like Bernhardt and Duse might speak Hindostanee or Syriac if they chose, and you would glory in them just the same. Frau Sorma is a good German actress for good German people, and it is not likely that she attempts to try anything more.

Her Nora impressed me as being a trifle noisy in the comedy movements too irrepressible, too repose-less, too vehement. And in the serious episodes the actress apparently lacked depth. The facial expression was all there, but there was nothing else—nothing to touch the emotions, to go deeper than mere stage trick, to carry you away in spite of yourself. Sorma is no artist. There is no doubt about that, but it is cold art, dished up for respectful use. She has the Duse trick of inserting her finger tips in her eyes to remove the tears, and the very general trick of brushing her forehead in times of anguish. And the forehead method is always rather thoroughgoing. In real life there is not one woman in twenty who remembers that she owns a forehead when grief or distress overtakes her.

The German newcomer is absolutely mistress of herself at all times. Her art is well regulated, and everything is "done to a turn," as they say in culinary parlance. Her stage movements are all good. She doesn't sit in fifteen different chairs during a five minutes' tete-a-tete, as is the custom on the stage. She knows how to stand still, how to talk picturesquely, and how to prevent monotony by legitimate means. But never at any time do you forget that this woman is acting. When she is gay, it is with the gayety that looks well on the stage only, and when she is sombre and pensive, it is with moods the effect of which has been diligently studied. The actress has temperament, and it would possibly be displayed to greater advantage in more plausible plays than "A Doll's House."

Her Nora was perhaps less comprehensible than other Noras who have disported themselves in thiscelry. Here was a Nora who could never have carried out the purpose of the play (if the play really contains a purpose, which I doubt). Frau Sorma would have lived happily with her husband forever after, and all the little psychological fixings would have been quite impossible. However, it is quite absurd to discuss the Ibsen character to-day. Actresses like it because it gives them emotional opportunities, and has become a sort of a test that no woman has ever really succeeded in either part makes very little difference. Perhaps it is this very lack of distinct success that endears the Ibsen and Sudermann heroines to aspirants. There is always a possibility of doing something that nobody else has done.

The new star was well "supported" by Matthias Pfeil, Arthur Eggeling, Max Blau and Auguste Burmester. And she is probably well-pleased this morning that she came to America. The audience at the Irving Place must be delightful people to play before. They are studiously attentive, in deadly earnest, positively certain that they are going to enjoy themselves, and persistently enthusiastic. Agnes Sorma is not likely to become a fad or to prove popular with men and women who do not understand German. She has nothing startling to offer us, no novel stage methods to illustrate. She is a calm, agreeable, satisfactory artist, who knows all that there is to know about the mere art of acting, but is not able to evolve any new or original phase.

And, of course, in the case of an unknown star, we are all out on hunting for originality, for some more amazing standard of merit than we have yet discovered. That standard was not to be found in Agnes Sorma. German audiences, however, will be pleased with this actress, and her brief engagement at the Irving Place Theatre should be a happy one. The indefatigable Mr. Conried—who is as astute as well as a manager doesn't the combination sound incongruous?—will undoubtedly be rewarded for his enterprise.

Dan Leno at the Olympia.

For many weeks past the peaceful and law-abiding citizens of this town, while following their usual avocations, have paused from time to time to note the solemn warning of the approach of Dan Leno, that looked down upon them from every pictorial fence.

"He is coming at last," was the song the posters sang. Last night Mr. Leno himself put an end to the terrible period of suspense through which we have passed by exhibiting himself on the stage of Mr. Hammerstein's chaste temple of art.

Mr. Leno is an entertainer of a type known to several generations of amusement seekers as a British equipage, and if a tad hat, big shoes, a torn coat and ill-fitting vest and trousers are funny, then Mr. Leno may be accounted one of the keenest and subtlest humorists that ever came over the sea. The thoughtful student, however, will find his performances interesting, not because of the laughter that they awaken in him, but as examples of the effect of the transmigration of humor.

Mr. Leno's efforts serve to illustrate the consequences of taking American humor of the Danbury News period to England, prolonging its life there for many years that it might be tortured in the music halls and then bringing it back in British garb for New York consumption. When Mr. Leno tells us that in driving nails with a hammer he missed everything but his thumb we think sadly of our own dead and gone Spoopendyke, and when he hitches up his baggy trousers and remarks that he put them on hind side before and doesn't know whether he's coming or going he only awakens pathetic memories of Charley Backus, of Dan Bryant and of Eph Horn.

In one song he appeared as a shopman. It was the best thing in his repertory—and in another he sang of the North Pole and wore a thick suit of arctic furs, which he is liable to need before the close of his engagement.

Too much praise cannot be given to the ladies and gentlemen with ligneous vine hands, who worked so hard to give Mr. Leno's debut the appearance of a success. The acoustics of the Olympia are so remarkable that eight personal friends of the manager can at a given moment produce an effect similar to the roar of Niagara Falls on a busy day.

During the first part of the programme two monkeys caused a great deal of amusement by their innocent gambols. They were funny, but knew nothing of dramatic art. They will linger, a blessed memory, in the minds of those who remained to see the performance of Mr. Leno.

And yet nobody called upon them for a speech.

BARONESS TO TEACHERS.

Niece of the Baroness von Marenholtz Bulow Tells of Her Aunt's Kindergarten Work.

Baroness Von Bulow, niece of the Baroness Von Marenholtz Bulow, the life-long friend of Froebel, addressed the kindergarten teachers of New York and vicinity yesterday afternoon in the Assembly Hall of the United Charities building. The Baroness was escorted to the platform by Miss Cynthia Dozier and Richard Watson Gilder.

Her aunt, the lecturer said, would have been delighted, as would Froebel, at the interest manifested in the work in the United States. "My aunt," she said, "spoke of this in the last few moments of her life, and I have come among you to carry out her dearest wish."

Though there were no permanent changes in the cast, as just stated, Joseph Herbert's part of the French spy was placed last night, and exceedingly well played, by Thomas Klein, whose task on the programme is to represent Bittersweise, a gendarme. Same one in the audience suggested that Mr. Rice's failure to arrive with the Parisian clocks had enabled Mr. Herbert to oversleep and thereby fail, without blame on his part, to reach the theatre until the final curtain had fallen.

Miss Cheridah Simpson was likewise temporarily out of the cast last night. She was replaced by a rather clever understudy whose name was not forthcoming, though identities were numerous.

Provided the Campanini does not go to the bottom with Mr. Rice and his cargo of Parisian clocks, the Queen's Jubilee will join with "The Girl from Paris" in the fame of the Herald Square Theatre's next distribution of the time of day. But even if the worst happens, there are still the industry of Waterbury, Conn., and the enterprise of Manager Mann.

Both Clocks and Rice Behind Time.

"If you want to know the time ask a p'liceman," says the old song. But the old song is out of date, thanks to the enterprise of Mr. Edward S. Rice. The proper thing to do nowadays when your watch has stopped is to mention the matter to a "Girl from Paris" souvenir nighter. Four or five weeks ago Mr. Rice presented them all with handsome clocks, and last night, in order that the time of day should be still more firmly impressed on the public mind, he passed around some more clocks. On both occasions the demand for clocks was so great that all the people who could be crowded into the Herald Square Theatre willingly sat through a performance, the main features of which are known even to the babes in Brooklyn. But there is an interesting bit of history attached to last night's clocks. They were to be dainty Parisian clocks, appropriate to the title and spirit of the performance, selected in person by Mr. Rice, and due to arrive here last Saturday.

Unfortunately, however, the person from whom Mr. Rice purchased the Parisian clocks had neglected to wind them up. Consequently Mr. Rice was "thrown down," to quote his press agent, by his own clocks, and missed the boat. So it happened that last night, while the "Girl from Paris," and her companions, were cavorting about the stage in the blithesome manner characteristic of them, Mr. Rice and the souvenir clocks were floating around in the broad Atlantic aboard the Campania.

But Manager Mann proved equal to the emergency with an extra consignment of time pieces, in the shape of paper weights, not from Paris; probably from Waterbury; and everybody was happy.

What is to be done with the Parisian clocks when they arrive? you ask. Why, last night was only the 150th performance of the "Girl from Paris." Clocks will not be a drug on the Herald Square Theatre market for weeks to come. As for the Parisian article, it is now positively promised for the 200th performance, which will help celebrate the Queen's Jubilee on May 24. So no more at present about Mr. Rice's clocks—though several of the prettiest girls in the piece showed last night that theirs had gone to their—that is to say, there were clocks on their stockings.

Josephine Hall and her "Sister Mary Jane's Top Note" made both at their highest altitude last night. Louis Mann laughed with the audience; it was a double, back-action "if is to laugh," quite irresistible. Dey's new dances seemed to exhibit that dainty dancer's charms in heretofore undiscovered aspects. And so it was with all the familiar people in all the familiar laughter-provoking characters—whether it was the clocks or the extra half-dollar per seat, it was certainly a great souvenir performance.

There were no changes in the cast. Why should there be? All these actors are helping to draw people to fill the seats at the Herald Square; and that is what the management is after. It is a long season in New York; and that is what most actors are after.

Those light and airy young creatures—Angela, May, Ethel, Gladys, Maud, Edith, Violet and Rose—who are bicycle girls at one stage of the festivities and Alpine maidens at another—were spick and span in new clothes. This is another proof of the prosperity of "The Girl from Paris." Otherwise these young women would have been admonished to make their old ones last to the end of the season. Many theatrical managers consider it very unlucky to furbish new clothes for their actors oftener than once in two or three seasons.

THE OPERA "FAUST" WITHOUT CALVE.

By John W. Keller

TO write of "Faust" is to reopen the burr of the chestnut. But that is neither unpleasant nor unprofitable when one is certain to find a kernel so sound and so sweet as Gounod's music. There are some things into which the destroying worm of time cannot find its way, and "Faust" is not the least of these. We may hunger for novelty and burn for new sensations, but when it comes to melody there are no songs like the old songs. Music is the one thing with which familiarity never breeds contempt. Therefore it was not surprising to find the vast auditorium of the Metropolitan Opera House crowded last night with people whose love of "Faust" made them forgive the absence of Mme. Calve, whose failure to appear as Marguerite was indeed a sore disappointment.

For novelty in the repertoire of a great prima donna like Calve is a thing to be longed for, and to have heard her sing Marguerite would have been a novelty to most of the auditors last night. The auditors last night, by the way, were not the conspicuous social celebrities of the regular season, which may account for the close attention they paid to the stage and the manifest delight they took in the performance. They were sorry to have missed Calve, for they had not heard her in "Faust" last Winter, but when they were confronted with Jean and Édouard de Reszke and Lassalle and Mantelli they forgot their disappointment.

Jean was especially fine. Instead of being worn and fagged by the long and arduous season that he has undergone, he was fresh and vigorous and more adorable than ever. His avoirdupois has decreased materially, and his "make-up" has been changed to enhance the youthful appearance that his slender proportions give him. Add to these charms for the eye, the fact that he was in superb voice last night, that his method was never more faultless and his art never more perfect, and it is easy to realize that an audience not in the least jaded with opera responded with enthusiasm to every effort of the famous tenor. When he sang "Salve di Mora" the women acted as though they heard the angels opening the gates of Paradise. Such appreciation must have been as gratifying to the artist as his performance was satisfactory to the audience.

Not less excellent or attractive in his way was the Mephistopheles of Édouard de Reszke. It was just as big, as sonorous, as mellifluous, as commanding as heretofore, and it moved the auditors to the same rapturous applause that was bestowed upon Jean's Faust. With two such roles in the hands of two such artists, it was possible to enjoy the opera without considering the prima donna.

Next in excellence was the Siebel of Mme. Mantelli, whose capabilities are too well known to New York to be discussed here. Mlle. Bauermeister, the ever well and ever faithful, was the Martha, as usual, and filled the role satisfactorily, as usual. If Mlle. Mauermeister should ever need an epitaph, and I hope, for one, that she wont, it will probably read something like this: "She never disappointed or offended an audience."

Lassalle met all the histrionic requirements of Valentine admirably and was in unusually good voice. Thus far, therefore, the performance was as good as any that was given in the regular season.

The weak spot in the cast was the assumption of the role of Marguerite by Madame Clementina De Vere. It was due to a substitution made necessary at the last moment by the illness of Madame Calve. Due allowance should be made for that fact. Madame De Vere knows the music of Marguerite and appreciates it, but her vocal powers are limited and her skill as an actress is almost nil. She did the best she could and the amiable audience forgave her.

Signor Mancinelli led the band, and was not nearly so lethargic as I remember to have seen him several times during the Winter. The country tour seems to have done him good. Our old friends of the chorus and ballet were all there in the same old clothes and backed by the same old scenery, as is entirely proper in a supplementary season. No one expects anything else, and the public would only think the management had gone crazy if it got anything else.

There was apprehension prior to last night that the observance of Holy Week would militate against the success of the four performances that Mr. Grau will give at the close of the operatic season of 1896-7. All such apprehension vanished when the crowd surged into the Metropolitan last night. Either New York does not regard the listening to opera a sin, or else it has invented some scheme of atonement by day for transgressions by night. Mr. Grau has made a good beginning, and if Mme. Calve will recover, the supplementary season may yet be a grand success, in spite of Holy Week.

Both Gay and Manhattan Now.

The first edition of "Gayest Manhattan" was good; the second, which received its initiation at Koster & Bial's Music Hall last night, is better. It is considerably brighter, merrier and more entertaining than the old version in every respect. The dialogue is wittier, the marches are more picturesque and the ensemble more practical, while the "Girl from Paris," and her companions, were cavorting about the stage in the blithesome manner characteristic of them, Mr. Rice and the souvenir clocks were floating around in the broad Atlantic aboard the Campania, and Manhattan.

Of course there isn't much of a plot to the review, or vaudeville, as Manager Will McConnell dubs it. Indeed, there is only just enough thread to hold the piece together. But, then, stories aren't really seriously sought in attractions of this kind. "Gayest Manhattan," however, is not entirely free from flaws. For instance, some of the dialogue between the two "green" Westerners is exceedingly dull and should be eliminated without delay. There are a number of catchy songs in the piece, but the one called "According to Deborah" is melody-less, funereal and wearisome. On the whole, though, the new "Gayest Manhattan" pleases, succeeds in creating merriment during its entire occupancy of the stage, and what more can be asked of it? The cast is an exceptionally strong one and the chorus very well trained.

But "Gayest Manhattan" isn't the only good thing in the bill. There are several others that stand out prominently, and one of them is Professor Leonidas and his trained dogs and cats. Leonidas's animals give one of the most remarkable exhibitions of animal sagacity ever seen in this city. They do everything but talk.

MUSIC, THEN A BULLET.

Robert Moses Shot Down a Small Boy Who Listened to His Zither.

Isaac Moses keeps a butter and egg shop at No. 1776 Lexington avenue. He has a son, Robert, twenty years old, who was alone in the store yesterday, and who soothed his solitude by playing the zither. The little chicks came out of the eggs to listen, so it was no wonder that three small boys stopped at the open door, charmed by the music. They were Edward Schubert and Benjamin Ginsberg, of No. 165 East One Hundred and Tenth street, and Joseph Geigley, of No. 171 East One Hundred and Tenth street, all about seven years old.

But young Moses wished to enjoy his music alone. Twice he ordered the boys away; they did not go. Then he went behind the counter and took up a pistol.

"For the third and last time," he cried, "get away from here!"

The three boys laughed. Moses deliberately pulled trigger. His bullet struck Edward Schubert in the head, glanced around his skull, making a wound four inches long, emerged and buried itself in a passing truck.

Schubert fell unconscious. At the same time, as in ambulance from the Harlem Hospital came the boy's mother, Mrs. Frieda Schubert, who had been told what had happened. She frantically raised her son, wiped the blood from his face, kissed him, and called on him to speak to her. The boy will recover.

He will be charged with shooting with intent to kill in the Harlem Police Court this morning.

No Opera for Next Season.

Between the acts of "Faust" last night the foyer of the Metropolitan Opera House was enlivened by the presence of numerous individuals of known Wagnerian predilections in hot pursuit of Anton Seidl. An evening paper had announced a new and startling solution of the problem as to Metropolitan opera next season. The most interesting feature of the solution was the scheme to eliminate the heretofore important quantity called impresario. This was to be accomplished by organizing the directors of the Metropolitan Opera House Real Estate Company into a concern having the added responsibilities, financial and otherwise, of managing grand opera artists. And Mr. Seidl was exploited as the prospective director of the problematic company.

Several of the Metropolitan directors who were present declared that they had no knowledge of any such plan, and that if such a plan should be proposed at to-day's meeting they should certainly resist their votes against it. This was just because they did not consider the scheme with Seidl in it fully as good in one as the other scheme with Damrosch in it, but because they were not in the opera business and not anxious to go into it.

As to-day's meeting of the directors is expected to settle the fate of the grand opera question for next season neither the directors referred to nor Mr. Grau nor Mr. Schoeffel wished to be quoted on the subject. Mr. Grau stated, however, that he was still of the opinion expressed in the Journal last Thursday, namely, that the Metropolitan Opera House would not be the scene of grand opera next season. The difficulty is almost wholly one of stars. There are none, practically, unless the De Reszkes reconsider their expressed determination not to sing in America next year. This determination, Willy Schott declared last night, had been taken with due deliberation and was final.

It seems safe to predict that if there is a season of German opera, under either Damrosch or Seidl, it will not be given at the Metropolitan Opera House, under any of the plans that now exist.

Rose Coghlan in a Newark Court.

Rose Coghlan, the actress, appeared at the Court House in Newark yesterday to testify against Neil Donahue, Neil Campbell and Edward Kenny, who are accused of stealing her diamond brooch while she was playing in that city a month ago. She was not called to the stand, as the case was adjourned till Thursday.